

eliminate the homonymy. Z.N.(S.)2263. *Bull. zool. Nom.*, vol. 36, pp. 53-56.

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— 1859a. *Actinologia Britannica: A History of the British Sea-Anemones and Madreporae. With Coloured Figures of All the Species.* Part 12. Van Voorst, London.

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SPHAERIIDAE IN MOLLUSCA AND INSECTA:
COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS TO REMOVE THE HOMONYMY.

Z.N.(S.) 1892

(see *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 32, pp. 60-62, 201-204)

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I am at present preparing an article on the 'minute bog beetle' family SPHAERIDAE, SPHAERIIDAE, MICROSPORIDAE, or whatever name is eventually applied to them. Also I will soon be describing one or more new species of '*Sphaerius* Waltl' from South America. These studies have led me to the proposal on the homonymy in family-group names in the *Bull. zool. Nom.* and have prompted the following comments.

Because it seems clear that SPHAERIIDAE for the Mollusca has priority over its use in Insecta, my comments are directed at a replacement name for the beetle family. I am opposed to using the family name SPHAERIDAE (Insecta) versus SPHAERIIDAE (Mollusca) for the following reasons:

(1) The name SPHAERIDAE would be grammatically incorrect and thus a perpetual error; (2) both names will inevitably be mis-spelled in the literature from time to time in the future and will be a recurring nuisance from that standpoint; (3) both spellings are already very similar to others in general use, such as *Sphaeridium*, SPHAERIDIIDAE, *Sphaerites*, SPHAERITIDAE, etc. Emendations such as SPHAERIDAE, SPHAERIUSIDAE or SPHAERIURIDAE would not alleviate this excess of names based on similar stems.

Therefore I believe that the suggestion that 'it is better to rename the beetle family after a genus other than *Sphaerius*, if one exists' as suggested by Professor Tortonese (*Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 32, p. 60, 1975) and seconded by the late Dr Reichardt (vol. 32, p. 203, 1976) has considerable merit. In this case another name, *Microsporus* Kolenati, 1846, *Meletemata entomol.*, fasc. 5, p. 64 (type species of nominal genus, *M. obsidianus* Kolenati *ibid.*, by monotypy) exists as a synonym of *Sphaerius* Waltl. Although *Microsporus* was originally proposed for a subgenus of *Georyssus* Latreille, 1809, it was treated as a synonym of *Sphaerius* by Matthews, 1899, *Monograph of the Coleopterous families Corylophidae and Sphaeriidae* (London) and this synonymy has been accepted by subsequent coleopterists. I therefore support Reichardt's suggestion that *Microsporus* be made the

nomenclaturally valid name of the genus and that the family name be changed to MICROSPORIDAE. This action would (1) solve the homonymy problem between the Mollusca and the Insecta and differentiate the beetle family name from the many names derived from similar stems, (2) eliminate the grammatically incorrect name SPHAERIDAE, (3) provide a highly descriptive generic and family name for the beetles involved, and (4) provide final stability for the beetle family name after many years of uncertainty. Furthermore, since Article 79c excludes the citing of precedents on the basis of earlier Opinions, analogous requests should be few and the final decision would still lie in each case with the consensus of the Commission and the zoologists concerned.

Undue delay in stabilising this problem of homonymy will only increase the problem. For example, since the question was first laid before the Commission, Abdullah (*Zool. Beitr.* vol 19, pp. 24, 26, 1973) has established a 'Series Sphaeriformia Abdullah, nov.' based on *Sphaerius* Waltl in the coleopteran suborder Myxophaga. Abdullah further stated (p. 41) that the molluscan family name PISIDIIDAE had been approved by the Commission. Perhaps most of the damage has been done, but a prompt decision should stop the proliferation of incorrect citations. In addition, contributors to the new Catalog of Coleoptera of North America north of Mexico, which is well under way, would benefit from a prompt decision.

[Note by the Secretary.- The family name PISIDIIDAE Gray, 1857, was added to the Official List in Direction 27 (*Ops. Decls. int. Comm. zool. Nom.* vol. 10, pp. 481-492) 'for use by any worker who may consider that the genera *Pisidium* Pfeiffer and *Sphaerium* Scopoli, 1777, the type genus of the taxon SPHAERIIDAE, belong to different family-group taxa'. That ruling clearly does not preempt a ruling placing SPHAERIIDAE on the Official List.

Dr Spangler's comment involves the following proposals to the Commission:

- (a) use of the plenary powers to suppress the generic name *Sphaerius* Waltl, 1838 and all subsequent uses for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy;
- (b) placing *Microsporus* Kolenati, 1846 (gender: masculine), type species, by monotypy, *Microsporus obsidianus* Kolenati, 1846, on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology;
- (c) placing *obsidianus* Kolenati, 1846, as published in the binomen *Microsporus obsidianus* (specific name of type species of *Microsporus* Kolenati, 1846) on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology;
- (d) placing the family name MICROSPORIDAE Reichardt, 1976 (type genus *Microsporus* Kolenati, 1846) on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology.

R.V.M.]

(2) By Dr Y.I. Starobogatov

(Letter received 24 August 1979): In 1798 Bruguière introduced *Cyclas* without description or species included by name, but accompanied by an illustration of *Sphaerium rivicola* of recent authors. In the following year Lamarck referred the sole species *Tellina cornea* Linnaeus, 1758 to the genus. But Lamarck's species is a composite, including *Cyclas rivicola* Lamarck, *Sphaerium scaldianum*